

# Village deities of Sri Lankan Tamils

---

**Village deities** are a common feature of the Hindu pantheon of deities. They are known as Gramadevatas. Each Hindu region and caste of India and South Asia has its share of village deities. **Sri Lankan Tamils** venerate their own group of **village deities** throughout Sri Lanka, specifically in the Tamil-dominated north and east of the island nation.

## Contents

---

[List of Hindu deities](#)

[Sanskritisation](#)

[See also](#)

[References](#)

[External links](#)

## List of Hindu deities

---

- Annamar is a deity of the Nalavar and Pallar caste.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Ayyanar, sometimes equated with Sasta is a popular deity in almost all villages. Aiyan is the Tamil name for Buddha and the Aiyana deity was first syncretised with Buddha.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Elu Kanniyar take the form of seven virgins.
- Kanakampikai Amman is the guardian goddess of the Vanni region.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Kannaki Amman is the chief deity of the coastal folk.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Kali, also Bhadrakali, is a popular female deity. Bhadrakali and also Vairavar (common deity in most villages) are both also worshipped in the form of the trishula.<sup>[4]</sup>
- Kattavarayan is a heroic saviour god and a deity of the Kōviars.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Naccimar is a women's goddess often conflated with Mariamman or Ampal, the mother Goddess.
- Naka Tampiran, a form of Shiva is also common deity in most villages.
- Periyatampiran, a form of Shiva is a caste deity of the Vannar.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Valliyakkan, a Yaksha deity popular among the Paraiyars.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Varunan, the sea god, used as totem by the Karaiyars.<sup>[7]</sup>
- Virummar, a form of Brahma is a deity of the Kollar and Tattar.<sup>[8][2]</sup>
- Ilanthari

## Sanskritisation

---

The identities of some of above the lesser known deities had been lost and most of them are now identified as Vairavar and Kali. Both are worshipped in the form of Trisulam. Furthermore, the Saiva revivalism initiated by Arumuga Navalar has enabled many high status Tamils to subsume the village deities within the Agamic pantheon.

Similarly have some of the deities been Christianized under the colonial influences. As many coastal inhabitants were under Portuguese rule converted to Catholicism, were many coastal Kannaki Amman shrines converted to churches of Our Lady (a title of Mary, mother of Jesus).<sup>[2]</sup>

## See also

---

- Religion in ancient Tamil country
- Village deities of Tamil Nadu

## References

---

1. Civattampi, Kārtikēcu (1995). *Sri Lankan Tamil society and politics* (<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=JERuAAAAMAAJ>). New Century Book House. p. 34. ISBN 9788123403953.
2. Ph.D. Ragupathy, Ponnampalam (1987). *Early Settlements in Jaffna: An Archaeological Survey* (<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=yI4cAAAAMAAJ>). University of Jaffna: Thillimalar Ragupathy. p. 217.
3. Schalk, Peter (2013). "Part 3: Extension and Conclusions". *Buddhism among Tamils in Tamilakam and Ilam*. Vol. 33. University of Uppsala: Historia Religionum. p. 215. ISBN 978-91-554-8412-5.
4. Kapferer, Bruce (2003-02-01). *Beyond Rationalism: Rethinking Magic, Witchcraft and Sorcery* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=MIE9uG6PgkYC>). Berghahn Books. p. 156. ISBN 9780857458551.
5. *The Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=0EBCAQAAQAAJ>). 1922. p. 12.
6. McGilvray, Dennis B. (1974). *Tamils and Moors: caste and matrilineal structure in eastern Sri Lanka* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=IEBuAAAAMAAJ>). University of Chicago. p. 205.
7. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=i2FhAAQAAQAAJ>). Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka. 1993. p. 137.
8. *Journal of the Institute of Asian Studies* (<https://books.google.com/books?hl=no&id=EjptAAAQAAJ>). Institute of Asian Studies. 1991. p. 7.

## External links

---

- Village deities of Tamil Nadu ([http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/publications/galleys/AFS\\_galleys/66-Valk.pdf](http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/publications/galleys/AFS_galleys/66-Valk.pdf))

---

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Village\\_deities\\_of\\_Sri\\_Lankan\\_Tamils&oldid=1080285167](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Village_deities_of_Sri_Lankan_Tamils&oldid=1080285167)"

---

This page was last edited on 31 March 2022, at 09:46 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License 3.0; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.